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SYSTEM ACTION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AIRGRAM

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A-115
NO.

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

DEPT PASS: GUATEMALA (2)

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MAY 18 1 04 PM 1969

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

RS/DATE: MAY 15 1969
ANALYSIS BRANCH

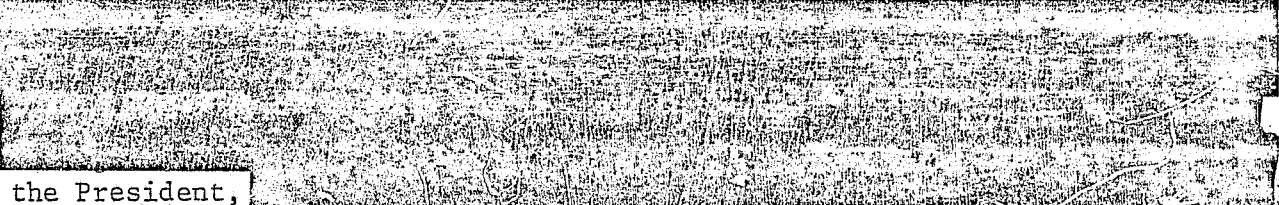
SUBJECT: New Broom at National Police
DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/IR

REF

REVIEWED BY *Euf* DATE *Oct 1981*
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
MAY 20 1969

1. On A *21*, President Mendez's Private Secretary announced that Col. José Amadeo CHINCHILLA Orellana would replace Col. Victor Manuel GAMBOA Gramajo as Director General of the Guatemalan National Police. Gamboa became Governor of the Department of Guatemala setting in motion a number of other shifts among governors. Changes at the top in the civilian security forces had been forecast for some time, but Chinchilla's promotion was even better than had been hoped.



the President, *[redacted]* turned to the man who for the last two and three quarters years had made significant progress in culling the previously corrupt Treasury (Customs) Police.

3. Even though Chinchilla retains the title "Colonel", he effectively left the military in July, 1954, when the Castillo Armas reaction removed him from his position as Ambassador to Honduras and ordered his exile. Chinchilla had held high military positions under the Arévalo regime (becoming Army Chief of Staff for a brief period at the end of 1950), and he had served as Guatemalan Military Attaché in Mexico during the Arbenz period before his short stint in Honduras. Castillo Armas formally permitted Chinchilla to return from exile in November, 1956, but he continued to reside in Mexico until 1958. One of a number of officers to return at the beginning of the Ydígoras period (others include his replacement as Director of the Treasury Police, Col. José BARZANALIANA Larrave, and the new Governor

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Drafted by:

POL:DHClare:mm:5/8/69

Contents and Classification Approved by: *M1DC*
POL:MDSmith

Clearances:

POL-I:Wilson DATE: CO. Hacker USAID:PCostello PC.

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of Zacapa, Col. Manuel Lisandro RECINOS Sandoval), Chinchilla was reinstated and for a short period assigned to Headquarters, Central Zone. After a few months, however, he left the military and spent the next eight years as a privately employed salesman until tapped by the PR in 1966 for the Treasury Police position.

4. Chinchilla, now 63, lived four years in the United States after graduation from the Guatemalan Military Academy in 1926 and attended one of the first Leavenworth courses in 1946. He has always been considered friendly to the United States. Uncle of ex-Minister of Defense, General Rolando CHINCHILLA Aguilar, Amadeo Chinchilla quickly built a reputation for personal integrity in the Customs Police. He inherited a corrupt, incompetent force and in a few years vastly increased its effectiveness and rid it of every grafter to come to his attention. Both the USAID Chief Public Safety Adviser and the Military Attaché have been impressed with his intelligence, honesty and an administrative grasp frequently absent in previous Directors General. In sum, his was a well deserved promotion.

5. Chinchilla has wasted no time in carrying out his Presidential mandate. The press has already reported on six firings, including both officers and members of the ranks, on charges of pay-offs and petty graft. Several of the accused have, amazingly, been charged with criminal offenses and now await trial. Chinchilla also initiated a series of meetings sponsored by the San Carlos Law School, in which jurists addressed members of the National Police Force on such themes as: "Police Collaboration in the Administration of Justice". The force, and indirectly Chinchilla, received widespread credit for quickly capturing the three men who killed a prominent owner of a gasoline station during a robbery. Police held a press conference in which one of the accused confessed. In another recent case, police identified a young girl, shot a dozen times apparently after she told her companions that she wished to leave the FAR. The detailed police press statement seemed designed to increase media confidence in police accounts, which have not enjoyed credibility for some time.

6. Predictably, the Government-owned DIARIO DE CENTRAL AMERICA joined in editorially praising the "purification" of the National Police. In a clear reference to the Public Safety Program, DIARIO warned (apparently seriously) "One should be careful even of foreign technicians so that among their useful instruction they do not inject us with repellent customs such as police brutality that some in the North have adopted based upon psychoses buried in racial complexes."

7. COMMENT: There is some speculation that recent shifts display some pattern. As mentioned above, Chinchilla, Barzanaliana, Recinos--to which may be added Zacapa Base Commander, Col. Guillermo ECHEVARRIA Vielman--all held meaningful positions during the First and Second Revolutions, and some dedicated Rightists still consider them a little pink. We have no evidence to support this contention.